

A Quarterly Newsletter Of

DURHAM

The City  
of Durham



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Winter 2001



## Preserving our past— planning our future

Aside from the three smokestacks, drivers on Camden Avenue will hardly recognize Durham's old incinerator building. The facility, which was the site of the city's sanitation operations during the 1960s, has been transformed into the City's new Solid Waste Management offices.

Located at 1833 Camden Avenue, the newly renovated 26,000 square foot building will house administrative offices, training and break areas, and locker and shower rooms. It will also serve as a staging area for truck and equipment maintenance. In addition, a 150-seat auditorium will feature state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment for use by the City. The project should be completed this winter.

In keeping with his future-thinking values, Solid Waste Management Director David McCary hired a "green

building" design consultant and had the old incinerator redesigned using many "green building" techniques. For instance, the building was stretched east to west to provide a greater southern exposure. This allows for natural daylighting, which will reduce energy use for lighting year-round. Many windows were added, which are tinted to reduce glare. Fluorescent lamps in energy-efficient fixtures were installed to provide supplemental artificial lighting. These fixtures were outfitted with motion and photo sensors to ensure that lights are only on when needed.

The orientation of the building, windows, space design and roof system will all work together to make the building easy to heat and cool, thus reducing energy demands. Native trees and plants were selected for the building's landscape, saving water, providing wildlife habitat and cooling the building in the summer.

In addition to reusing an old building, many recycled-content products, such as carpet, were used during construction. Most materials were purchased locally and were chosen to be both durable and repairable.

We welcome visitors to our new building. Come to our open house in February to see how well green building works!

*The City's old incinerator has been turned into a state-of-the-art "green building."*



## Automated collection system coming to Durham neighborhoods

This spring you may notice a different kind of trash truck driving through your neighborhood. Using three, new, fully automated vehicles, the Department of Solid Waste Management will be evaluating the cost and operational benefits of automated collection. With automated collection, the operator uses a set of controls inside the truck cab to operate a mechanical arm that lifts, dumps and returns the container to the curb.

While the truck servicing your home may change, the container won't. The standard 90-gallon container, which is currently being used, is ideal for the fully automated vehicles the department will be using. With fully automated collection, it is imperative that all trash be placed inside the 90-gallon container.

Cameras will be located in the truck hopper so that the driver will be able to observe violations to the City's recycling ordinance. If newspaper, glass bottles and jars, aluminum cans, steel cans, or corrugated cardboard are viewed as the waste is dumped, an educational violation notice will be left for the resident.

Automating the collection process helps keep staffing levels low, increases productivity and reduces job-related injuries. One automated vehicle opera-



tor can do the same work of the conventional rear-loader semi-automated vehicle, which has three operators.

Not every semi-automated route can be replaced with a fully automated route. Where it is feasible, however, fully automated collection is more efficient, as well as more aesthetically pleasing.

Automated refuse collection vehicles have several advantages over the traditional waste collection methods. Our goal is to continue our efforts to look for ways to reduce the overall operating expense of the department through these innovative concepts.

## Yard waste collection schedule

Between January 8 and 19, all residents, including those who do not have a yard waste cart, may set Christmas trees at the curb for pick up. Remember to remove all stands, decorations, lights and tinsel.

Yard waste collection is suspended during most of January. For families with a yard waste cart, curbside yard waste collection will resume on January 22. After that date, Christmas trees will be collected with yard waste.

After regular collection resumes on January 22, Christmas trees may be dropped off at no charge at the City Waste Disposal and Recycling Center at 2115 E. Club Boulevard, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to noon.

*"One Person's Trash..." is a part of the Department of Solid Waste Management's educational campaign to promote waste reduction and recycling programs.*

## City offices leading the way

In 1998, the City of Durham joined the Environmental Protection Agency's Waste Wise program. As a WasteWise partner, the City government set goals for itself in the areas of waste reduction, recycling and buying recycled. During the first full year of the program, City offices recycled about 28 tons of paper and containers!

City departments, however, have done a lot more than just recycling! For example, last February, the Human Resources Department began to place weekly job openings on the Internet and the City's Intranet, rather than on paper. This decision saves 13 reams of paper each week! During the same time, an online job application option was instituted, saving even more paper. In fact, the City will avoid purchasing some 7 tons of paper this year—at a cost savings of \$2,000 annually.

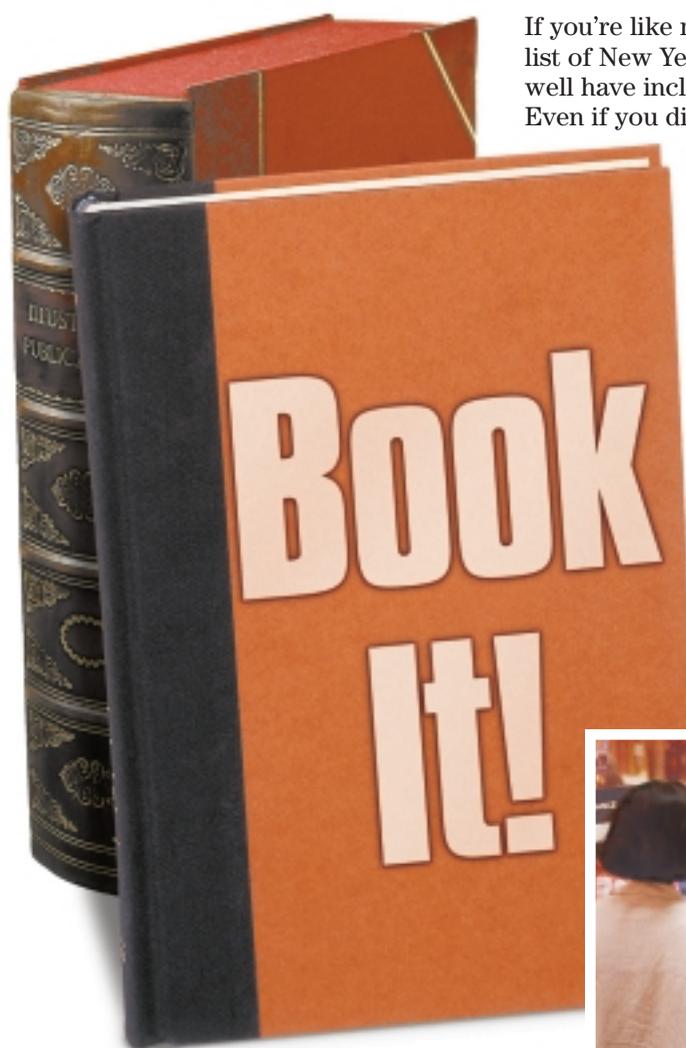
In September, the Finance Department selected new pay-check envelopes. The new envelopes are made from unbleached, recycled paper and are recyclable in the "mixed paper" bin in City offices. This simple purchasing change equates to saving two full-grown trees per year.

These are just two examples. Other Departments are also making progress in being more Earth-conscious. Here are what those departments are doing: Employee Training and

Development—phasing out the use of Styrofoam; Solid Waste Collections—building a certified "green" facility; Public Works and other City Departments—switching to non-hazardous fluorescent bulbs; and the City Print Shop—transitioning to non-toxic, vegetable-based inks. The Purchasing Division continues to research, test and purchase an increasing number of recycled-content products in addition to the recycled letterhead, business cards, toilet paper, paper towels, folders and notepads it has bought for a number of years.

Making sure that all employees know about the program is also an important part of the plan. All new employees receive training on the City's Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention Policy (viewable on the City's web page) during orientation. Individual employee suggestions and research lead to most of the waste-reducing ideas that are implemented. Employees are encouraged that the City's program is reducing waste while minimizing long-term costs.

According to Commercial Waste Reduction Coordinator Jennifer Brown, "It is the City of Durham's responsibility to find innovative ways to reduce waste while saving taxpayer dollars." She continued, "We believe in setting an example of environmental stewardship."



If you're like many Americans, your list of New Year's resolutions may very well have included "read more books." Even if you didn't include it, this is a great time of year to get into the habit of reading. It's also a good time of year to start a new reuse habit—using more of the resources at the local library or finding reading pleasure and treasure at a used bookstore.

While you're at it, why not read and discuss a few books about the environment this year? You can learn more about what's going on and why, as well as what others have to say about it.



Here are some recommendations to help you get started. These books come from many different perspectives. We certainly wouldn't endorse all of these opinions, and we doubt that you will either. However, it's good to read what others have to say as you make your own decisions about issues.

**History**—Believe it or not, several people have written about the history of trash. If you've ever wondered "how" or "why" regarding trash collection, recycling and more, reading these books will help answer your questions. Two notable examples that look at American garbage are Martin V. Melosi's *Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform, and the Environment, 1880-1980* and Susan Strasser's *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash*. Another good choice is William Rathje and Cullen Murphy's *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage: What Our Garbage Tells Us About Ourselves*.

**Conservation**—*Our Land, Ourselves: Readings on People and Place*, which was compiled by the Trust for Public Land, includes 78 essays by various writers, naturalists, historians and more. These writings focus on how we relate to the land and to one another.

A classic in the call for the "health" of the land is Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*. Published in 1949, this book struggles with how we can both use the land and care for it. Consider reading as well Leopold's posthumously published *For the*

*Health of the Land: Previously Unpublished Essays and Other Writings*.

**Environmental Awareness**—Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* was originally published in 1962. Researched and written before the first Earth Day and before the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this was the book that made "environment" a household word. Whether you agree or disagree with the conclusions of the author, it's difficult to understand the roots of contemporary environmental concern without reading this book.

There are also many books that have been written in response to *Silent Spring*. Learn more about this country's dialogue on the environment by perusing them as well.

**Wildlife**—Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is an evocative book by a renowned naturalist. You will never look at nature with a jaded eye again after you've seen it through the loving, but truthful, eyes of Dillard. *The Condor's Shadow: The Loss and Recovery of Wildlife in America* by David Wilcove explores the impact of human activities on the survival and extinction of plant and animal species in America.

Make books a bigger part of your life. Discuss the books you read with friends. Start or join a book club. Swap good books. Explore the library or used bookstores. Your world will become a bigger—and better—place.

# The LATEST & GREATEST

## Tracking trends

### A "sticky" issue



In paper recycling, pressure-sensitive adhesives are a sticky problem. Pressure-sensitive adhesives (PSAs) include self-stick stamps, labels, removable sticky notes and self-adhesive envelopes. PSAs can create difficulties during paper recycling because they break down into small particles, called "stickies," which gum up paper recycling equipment.

Stamps are one of the most visible examples of PSAs in our daily lives. In 1990, none of the stamps sold by the U.S. Postal Service were self-adhesive. By 1999, more than 93 percent of the approximately 38 billion stamps sold were the self-stick variety.

While these stamps represent only about 12 to 15 per-

cent of all PSAs, the U.S. Postal Service has taken the lead in exploring and finding environmentally benign PSAs. Over the coming years, these new PSAs could transform self-adhesive technology, as well as improve the economics of and reduce the technical challenges posed by adhesives in paper recycling.



### Where have all the tires gone?

Last fall's tire recalls made tire recycling national news. As the tire recall expanded to include millions of tires, media analysts questioned the recycling industry's capacity to accept the volume. As it turns out, most of the challenges were in supplying enough correctly sized replacement tires, not in recycling the recalled tires. Why? Each year in the United States, some

270 million tires are scrapped. The 6.5 million recalled tires represented only about 2.4 percent of last year's total number of scrap tires. Because the recalled tires were returned to stores and dealers where new tires were provided, the recalled tires went directly to recyclers in most cases. The recalled tires were shredded for reuse as fuel or in road and marine construction, or turned into such products as playground surfacing. Annually, more than 65 percent of scrap tires are reclaimed or recycled.

### An Olympic achievement

The Olympic flame was extinguished in Sydney about three months ago. However, the Olympic achievements of Sydney's Summer Games are still underway. At the Games, a U.S. company, BioCorp, provided cornstarch-based biodegradable cutlery, cups, plates, straws and bags. These items, along with paper and cardboard food packaging, were composted. The first batches of compost are ready for use this month. Besides leaving behind a useful organic product, the more than 11,000 athletes, 5,000 support staff, and 9 million spectators and visitors also got to see a compostable American product in action.

Each year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes updated information on municipal solid waste generation, recycling and disposal. During 1998, the most recent year for which facts and figures are available, the nation's overall recycling rate was 28.2 percent. This is the highest rate yet achieved!

But while we have come very far, we still have a long way to go. We need to capture more readily recyclable materials, such as aluminum and steel cans, glass bottles and jars, paper, and yard trimmings. When we don't recycle as much as we can, we let products—and resources—go to waste.

For instance, when we recover 57.1 percent of steel cans, as we did in 1998, it means that we are still wasting 42.9 percent of them. When we recycle 28.9 percent of glass containers, we are still discarding 71.1 percent. Try to recycle 100 percent of the recyclable materials that you use. If you aren't sure what or where to recycle, please call our office.

Remember that buying recycled-content products is an important way to support recycling, too!

For more information, visit the EPA's web site at [www.epa.gov/osw](http://www.epa.gov/osw) and click on "Basic Facts." Or, call 800-424-9346 to request a copy of the Environmental Fact Sheet with 1998 figures, which is document number EPA530-F-00-024.



# Why do we shop so much?

Even if you don't have a coffee mug, bumper sticker or sweatshirt emblazoned with one of these sayings, you've probably seen and heard (and maybe felt) them

many times. Shopping is a national pastime. Certainly, Americans shop for what they need—food, clothing and shelter. But the shopping doesn't end there.

“Shop till you drop.”

“When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping.”

“I shop; therefore, I am.”

A great deal of what many of us purchase each year doesn't come from the category of “need,” but from that of “want.” And we do want a lot. Whether it's new and improved, or simply a must-have accessory to a previously purchased item, we carry around a shopping list—whether it's in our head, on a slip of paper or electronically filed in a hand-held organizer.

We also shop to feel better. We even have a name for it, therapeutic shopping. A bad day at work or an argument with a friend may be enough to send us to the mall. However, it doesn't seem to be working too well. Some 80 percent of people have reported feeling guilty after a shopping trip.

In shopping, we seek community as well. Often, we socialize with family members and friends by shopping together. Restaurants at shopping centers encourage this weekend and evening shopping-for-entertainment.

Shopping has gotten very easy, too. Credit cards make it simple to make unplanned, and sometimes expensive, purchases. According to CardWeb.com, a credit card research company, of the approximately 105 million households in America, 78 million have at least one credit card.

However, easy buying comes at a cost. While most consumers claim they don't intend to carry a balance from month to month on credit or store cards, the average American household with at least one card carries a balance of more than \$7,500. Recently, consumer credit has outpaced consumer spending and income growth—meaning that Americans are getting ever deeper into debt. The national personal savings rate is now

less than 2 percent of disposable income.

Purchasing also has some social costs. More than 100 years ago, Thorstein Veblen coined the phrase “conspicuous consumption.” Economist Juliet Schor claims that conspicuous consumption has increasingly turned into competitive consumption. With constantly changing fashion in everything from cars to clothes to home furnishings, keeping up with the Joneses is a complex and expensive matter.

Consumption by its very definition also has many environmental costs. Each week, the average American's lifestyle consumes 300 shopping bags worth of natural resources. Once products arrive at home, the packaging must be recycled or disposed. The products we're replacing must be stored, given away, sold, recycled or disposed.

National movements such as “Use Less Stuff Day” and “Buy Nothing Day” are increasingly asking citizens to stop focusing on consuming. Shopping is fun, but so are a lot of other pastimes. If you want to buy less stuff, try the following.

- ◆ Meet friends and family members at a local park.
- ◆ Organize a game night with friends.
- ◆ Volunteer to help a local charitable organization or civic group.
- ◆ Give up impulse purchasing. Create a waiting period before making a purchase.
- ◆ Don't replace items that still work.
- ◆ Use up what you have already purchased.
- ◆ When you buy, look for energy-efficient and recycled-content products.
- ◆ Focus on your quality of life and not your quantity of stuff.

## news you can use

### Re-refined is right for you

Motor oil doesn't wear out—it just gets dirty. Used oil can be cleaned of contaminants, such as dirt, water, fuel and additives. Once the oil is cleaned, the base oil is used as the main ingredient in new motor oil. Used oil can be re-refined over and over again. Currently, about 14 percent of used oil is re-refined. The remainder goes for a variety of other products and uses.

It only takes about 1 gallon of used motor oil to create 2 quarts of re-refined oil. Compare that to the 42 gallons of crude oil required to make the same 2 quarts of virgin oil. Plus, re-

refining uses half as much energy.

Re-refined oil is subject to the same refining, mixing and performance standards as virgin oil. Next time you buy motor oil at a retail store or have your oil changed at a service center, ask for re-refined oil.

For more information, visit the American Petroleum Institute's web site, [www.api.org/pasp/recycleoil/](http://www.api.org/pasp/recycleoil/).

### Be part smart

The remote control just quits one day. A plastic part snaps off a toy. A china coffee cup slides from the counter to the floor, pieces flying.

Things break and get lost. That doesn't mean that you need to replace the television, the toy or the dishes. Instead, look for replacement parts.

Begin with the product manufacturer. Many manufacturers provide free or low-cost repair and replacement parts and ship them directly to you. Most manufacturers have a toll-free number or web site, so that you

can contact them at no charge. For some products, such as cars and trucks, parts stores carry various replacement items locally.

If the manufacturer can't provide the part, try a repair shop or scrap dealer. Repair shops and scrap dealers often have parts and accessories on hand. Check with antique and second-hand stores, as well. Garage sales and on-line auction sites are

another place to look.

If you still can't find what you're looking for, search for “replacement parts” along with the item name on the Internet. You might find that several sites provide information about or sell parts. For instance, Replacements, Limited carries more than 137,000 patterns of china, crystal and silver. If you

break or lose a piece or two, they can provide a list of pieces available in your pattern, as well as the replacement cost. For information about them, visit [www.replacements.com](http://www.replacements.com) or call 800-REPLACE. Another company, North American Accessories (800-813-2395), searches for accessories for televisions, computers, cell phones and more. They specialize in parts no longer made or carried by the original manufacturer.



# WHAT'S UP?

Before beginning a waste reduction program, you need to know what you are wasting. You can find this out with a waste audit. A waste audit allows your business to take a look at what, how and how much you are wasting.

If you need assistance with performing a waste audit, contact Commercial Waste Reduction Coordinator Jennifer Brown at 560-4185 or at [jrbrown@ci.durham.nc.us](mailto:jrbrown@ci.durham.nc.us). We work with the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance to provide you with free, confidential services.

## Meet our staff



From left to right, T. Baridi Nkokheli (Operations Manager), Jennifer Brown (Commercial Waste Reduction Coordinator), Gabi Kaiser (Residential Waste Reduction Coordinator) and Alison Fiori (Waste Reduction Specialist)



## We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

We are also available to speak to clubs or organizations about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling and composting.

**The City of Durham Department of Solid Waste Management Waste Reduction Program**

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Funded by the City of Durham

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## Durham mixed paper drives planned

Tidewater Fibre Corp, in conjunction with the Department of Solid Waste Management, will hold a series of mixed paper recycling drives throughout the year.

All of the drives will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the dates listed below. Currently scheduled dates and locations are as follows.

March 3, 2001

Northgate Mall, off Guess Road behind Office Max

May 5, 2001

Kroger, on Hillsborough Road in back of Kroger

June 30, 2001

Woodcroft Shopping Center, off Hope Valley Road

September 8, 2001

Heritage Square Shopping Center, at Fayetteville Road and NC 147

October 27, 2001

South Square Mall, off University Drive

November 24, 2001

The Villages Shopping Center, beside the Post Office on Miami Boulevard near 98



January 5, 2002

Wal-Mart at Oxford Commons Shopping Center, 3500 N. Roxboro Road

Mixed paper includes ONLY the following items:

- phone books;
- white paperboard (white boxes that held dry food or goods);
- brown paperboard (cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, etc.);
- white and colored paper (construction paper, card stock, tablet paper, office paper, newspaper inserts, etc.);
- booklets (soft cover);
- magazines (no perfumes);
- manila envelopes (non-padded); and
- folders.

The following items should NOT be mingled with your mixed paper: no plastic windows; no wax-coated paper; no plastic-coated paper; no adhesives; no food contamination; no spiral binders, plastic covers, or other plastics or metals.

Volunteers will be on-site to assist you.

## Spring Clean goes green in 2001!



When you do your spring cleaning in a couple of months, plan to drop off things you don't need at one of the Spring Clean events. We accept bulky waste, such as furniture, televisions, tires, equipment and large toys. Spring Clean will take place from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 31, April 7, April 21 and April 28.

This year, in addition to the regular junk collection for disposal, the City will place a swap area at each site where you will be able to drop off or pick up quality reusable items. TROSA, a Durham community non-profit, will benefit from the event. There is no charge.

The swap area has been added to the annual program because each year a large percentage of the materials coming in are still usable, fixable or workable. As the City of Durham Impact Team Manager, Mitch Archer, said, "We're glad that we can landfill fewer tons AND give back to the community—that's the City's goal."

For more information, locations or a list of what is acceptable at the swap area, visit [www.ci.durham.nc.us/departments/solidwaste](http://www.ci.durham.nc.us/departments/solidwaste) and click on "Durham Reduces Waste." You may also call a City of Durham waste reduction coordinator at 560-4185 or the Impact Team Manager Mitch Archer at 560-4974.

## Hey, teachers!

K-12 waste reduction, recycling and composting education programs are available upon request. Call Alison Fiori at 560-4185 to schedule, or e-mail her at [afiori@ci.durham.nc.us](mailto:afiori@ci.durham.nc.us).

## Recycling's hurdle

Recycling has come a long way. From criticism about its effectiveness to low participation levels, recycling proponents have fought hard to promote the facts of recycling:

1. Recycling conserves natural resources and energy.
2. Recycling reduces pollution.
3. Recycling creates jobs.
4. Recycling is an effective way for individuals to make a positive difference in their environment.

Americans have responded to the facts with increased participation throughout the country. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the recycling rate has more than doubled during the past decade—reaching the present 28 percent.

As the popularity of recycling continues to grow, hurdles still stand in its way. Some government subsidies actually discourage the use of recyclables in manufacturing. While these federal financial benefits, incentives and policies were created to boost industrial expansion 100 years ago, their effects today are different.

For example, the 1872 Mining Law was enacted to encourage the discovery and mining of valuable natural resources. Today, potential miners can still obtain title to federally owned lands for a very low cost per acre. According to the law, miners are also not required to pay royalties on the minerals found on these lands. Recyclables must then compete with the low prices of subsidized mined materials. Although recyclables use less energy, require fewer natural resources and create less hazardous waste, subsidized mining often is more profitable.

Between now and the end of March, look for special telephone book recycling containers at the South Square and Northgate Mall drop-off centers.



This and many other examples are included in the report, *Welfare for Waste: How Federal Taxpayer Subsidies Waste Resources and Discourage Recycling*. The report was authored by four organizations: the Grassroots Recycling Network; Taxpayers for Common Sense; Friends of the Earth; and the Materials Efficiency Project. For a free copy of this report, visit [www.grm.org](http://www.grm.org) on the Internet.

## Get ready for Earth Day 2001



Mark your calendars now for Earth Day 2001. Our celebration is planned for Saturday, April 28 from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Historic Durham Athletic Park on West Corporation Street. Once again, we'll offer free admission to this event. There will be hands-on educational activities, music and entertainment, greener-living showcases, food, and much more.

The first 20 people to make a donation of \$25 or more will be recognized at the event. Please send your check, made payable to the Center for Environmental Education, to Aaryn Kay, Duke University, Box 90328, Durham, NC 27708-0328. Call 613-8015 for more information.